TITLE I SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Grant Award Period: April 15, 2013--September 30, 2015

Application Window 1 - Application Draft Due Date: November 15, 2012
Final Application Due Date: December 15, 2012

Application Window 2 - Application Draft Due Date: February 15, 2013
Final Application Due Date: March 15, 2013

LEA COVER PAGE

NAME OF SCHOOL DISTRICT: **TN ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

ADDRESS: **710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY, AJT, 5TH FLOOR**

CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE: **NASHVILLE, TN**

AREA CODE/TELEPHONE NUMBER: **615-253-4716**

FAX NUMBER: **615-253-4117**

DISTRICT GRANT CONTACT PERSON: **JENNIFER SHORTER**

POSITION/TITLE: **PUBLIC GRANTS MANAGER**

ADDRESS: **710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY, AJT, 5TH FLOOR**

CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE: **NASHVILLE, TN**

AREA CODE/TELEPHONE NUMBER: **615-378--7528**

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DATE SUBMITTED: **3/15/13**

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Title I School Improvement Funds
School Improvement Grant Application for 1003 (g)
(Coordinated with RTTT and 1003(a) Funds)

A. Assurances: An LEA must include the following assurances in its application for a
School Improvement Grant. *(Items 1-4 are federal SIG requirements; items 5-14; Tennessee*
Department of Education (TDOE) lists other federal and state requirements.)
The LEA must assure that it will—

1) Use its School Improvement Grant to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each Priority school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;
2) Establish annual goals for student achievement on Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements in order to monitor each Priority school that it serves with school improvement funds;
3) If it implements a restart model in a Priority school, include in its contract or agreement terms and provisions to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements;
4) Report to the TDOE the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements;
5) Modify its practices and policies as necessary to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively;
6) Meet the requirement that School Improvement Funds will be used only to supplement and not supplant; federal, state, and local funds a school or school district would otherwise receive;
7) Agree to the lower-tier certification covering lobbying and debarment/suspension under 34 CFR Parts 82 and 85;
8) Participate in evaluation studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, the TDOE and the local school district;
9) Complete and submit an end of the year written report to the TDOE documenting the use of these funds and the impact on school improvement;
10) Ensure participation of all principals of schools awarded the School Improvement Grant in the TDOE Turnaround Principal Cohort;
11) Ensure that principals of schools receiving the School Improvement Grant will be given autonomy over teacher selection;
12) Ensure that principals designated to lead SIG schools will have autonomy over staff selection beginning immediately upon receipt of the grant;
13) Ensure that schools receiving the School Improvement Grant will meet or exceed 8 to 10 percent gains in math and reading/language arts or be subject to takeover by the state's Achievement School District (ASD);
14) The State may retain Section 1003 (a) school improvement funds for direct technical assistance to eligible schools and districts for its statewide system of support as allowed in Section 1003 (b) (2).

Print Name of Director of Schools (or designee): **Chris Barbic**	Signature of Director of Schools (or designee):	Date **3/15/13**
Print Name of Board Chair: **N/A**	**Signature of Board Chair** **N/A**	**Date** **N/A**

Signature of the local education agency's (LEA) Title I director indicate the proposed plan verifies that the application addresses the designated purposes for the use of these School Improvement funds.

The School Improvement funds are appropriately allocated. The proposal is in substantially approvable form. The application will be forwarded to the Office of Federal Programs in Nashville for final approval.

Name of School District: Achievement School District		
Title I Director's Name: Jennifer Shorter	Title I Director's Signature: *Jennifer Shorter*	Date 3/15/13

LEA Waiver

The LEA must check the following waiver if applicable and indicate for which schools it will implement the waiver.

☐　　Implementing a schoolwide program in a Priority Title I participating school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold.

_____
　(School(s)

I. General Information

A. Overview

Tennessee strives to provide a system of support that enables all students to improve every year and for those who are furthest behind to improve at a faster rate. The purpose of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) is to provide resources through a competitive application process to enable local education agencies (LEAs) with the greatest capacity to turnaround its Priority Schools, the state's lowest-performing schools.

B. Funding Priority and Schools to be Served

The goal of School Improvement 'g' funds is to target priority schools to implement robust and comprehensive reforms to transform school culture dramatically and increase student outcomes.

Eligible Applicants: Local education agencies (LEAs) with designated 2012-2013 Priority Schools. Priority schools that were previously identified as a Tier I or Tier II school and received a FY 2009 or FY 2010 School Improvement Grant to implement a federal model are not eligible to apply for the FY 2011 grant.

A list of all Priority schools is provided in Attachment A. The list includes those eligible for FY2011 funds as well as those ineligible to apply.

Dual application windows are offered. Districts in leadership or structural transition are strongly encouraged to apply during the winter application window. LEAs should notify the TDOE of its intent to apply and indicate its chosen application window by October 15, 2012.

Funding: Successful LEA applicants are awarded a minimum of $50,000 and up to $2,000,000 annually per school for the term of the grant. The TDOE reserves the right to fund applications at a lesser amount if the grant application does not fully justify the budget expenditures.

With the exception of the schools implementing the closure model, grants are renewable for the two subsequent years contingent upon federal SIG funding and progress in implementing and meeting student achievement goals established by the LEA and approved by the TDOE and progress on SIG leading indicators. Each LEA/school will be required to submit an annual report, update to its grant, including budget and plan, in order to receive the grant renewal.

D. Reporting and Evaluation Requirements

Applicants awarded SIG funds must satisfy periodic reporting and accountability requirements throughout the term of the grant. These requirements address (a) fiscal accountability, (b) program accountability, (c) fiscal and program reporting, (d) site visits, and (e) internal evaluation.

1. Fiscal Accountability
SIG grant funds awarded under Section 1003(g) funds must be used to supplement not supplant state and local funds that the school would receive in the absence of Title I funds. SIG funds cannot be used to supplant non-federal funds or to replace existing services.

2. Program Accountability

Each LEA and school receiving a SIG is responsible for carrying out its school improvement responsibilities in accordance with its approved grant application and action plan.

3. Fiscal and Program Reporting Requirements

SIG grantees must submit at least quarterly expenditure reports and implementation progress reports to the TDOE. The LEA is responsible for ensuring that reports are accurate, complete, and submitted on time. Each district must agree to respond to data requests from TDOE and USED including EdFACTS data. All data for the leading indicators listed in section III. A of the final requirements must be collected and submitted as required.

4. Site Visits by TDOE Representatives

LEAs and their schools must agree to site visits which will validate information provided in expenditure and progress reports and gather more detailed information on implementation efforts and challenges.

5. Internal Evaluation and Development of Systems for Collection of SIG Data:

LEAs and schools funded under the SIG program will create and use data systems that include formative and summative assessments to provide staff, students, and parents, and community/business partners continuous feedback, to identify program processing and practices that are resulting in improved teaching and learning and to identify and make adjustments where needed.

The LEA's must monitor each Priority school that receives SIG funds to determine whether the school:

  a. Is meeting annual goals established by the LEA for student achievement on the State's ESEA assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics; graduation rate and attendance. The LEA should establish annual goals to cover all three years of implementation of the school implementation model.

  b. Is making progress on the leading indicators described in the final requirements. The following metrics constitute the leading indicators for the SIG program:

     1. Number of minutes within the school year;
     2. Student participation rate on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics by student subgroup;
     3. Dropout rate;
     4. Student attendance rate;
     5. Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB), early college high schools, or dual enrollment classes;
     6. Discipline incidents;
     7. Truants;
     8. Distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEA's teacher evaluation system; and
     9. Teacher attendance rate.

  Each LEA funded will document the monitoring of each SIG school's implementation progress on a quarterly basis. The Year One evaluation must include pre-implementation activities. A report must be sent to the state annually to include leadership team and milestone meeting notes.

E. Application Instructions and Application Review

1. Application Instructions

Each LEA must submit:

(1) LEA application

(2) School Level "Intervention Model" template (Turnaround, Appendix E, Restart, Appendix F, Closure, Appendix G or Transformation, Appendix H) for <u>each</u> eligible school that the LEA commits to serve, a spending plan (budget justification documents), and a 3 year budget. There is no word count limit in the text boxes but applicants are asked to be succinct.

Please submit applications electronically to SIG.Applications@tn.gov. A paper copy of ONLY the cover page and signed assurances of the LEA application must be submitted with original signatures. The LEA should keep a copy of the signed application. These pages must be mailed to Rita Fentress at the address listed below:

> Rita Fentress
> TN State Department of Education
> 5th Floor – Andrew Johnson Tower
> 710 James Robertson Pkwy
> Nashville, TN 37243-0379

2. Application Review

Reviewers will rate each application on its own merits and how well the application reflects rubric expectations. The scoring tool is located in Appendix B.

If deemed necessary, an interview with the applicant will be held to help the TDOE assess and ensure that the LEA application accurately reflects the LEA's capacity and commitment to school reform.

II. Schools to be Served

A. SCHOOLS TO BE SERVED: An LEA must include the following information with respect to the schools it will serve with a School Improvement Grant.

Using the 2012-2013 Tennessee Priority Schools List (Appendix A), an LEA must identify each Priority school the LEA commits to serve with SIG funds beginning SY 2013-2014 and check (X) the model that the LEA will use in each school. (Add rows as necessary.)

SCHOOL NAME	NCES ID #	INTERVENTION			
		turnaround	restart	closure	transformation
Whitney Elementary					X
Georgian Hills Elementary					X
Hanley Elementary			X		
Klondike Elementary			X		
Shannon Elementary			X		
Corry Middle			X		

Note: An LEA currently serving nine or more Tier I and Tier II (Cohort 1) schools and Priority (Cohort 2) schools, including both schools that are being served with FY 2009 SIG funds and FY 2010 SIG funds, may not implement the transformation model in more than 50 percent of Priority schools in this application. See section II.A.2(b) of the final requirements.

B. SCHOOLS THAT THE LEA WILL *NOT* SERVE:

An LEA must identify each Priority school the LEA will *not* serve.

SCHOOL NAME	NCES ID #

III. LEA Descriptive Information

A. Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The LEA must demonstrate that it has analyzed the needs of **each** school in order to select the appropriate intervention model that adequately addresses the needs of the school.

Complete the Comprehensive Needs Assessment portion of the appropriate model template for each Priority school the LEA commits to serve. (Appendix E-Turnaround, Appendix F-Restart, Appendix G, Closure, Appendix H, Transformation)

See Individual School Sections

B. LEA Capacity

The LEA is required to indicate its capacity to serve schools by reviewing the areas listed below. Considering each of the listed areas, describe the LEA's capacity to serve Priority schools with school improvement funds.

1. **LEA support to implementation.** How does the process for support and response to SIG schools differ from the support and response to other schools? (e.g.: Innovation Zone (*iZone*) designated to work solely with SIG schools; principals' direct access on a regular basis to the Superintendent/Director of Schools; structure to facilitate a seamless system of support including district SIG staff and areas of curriculum, special populations, student support, human resources, etc.)

The Achievement School District (ASD) operates as a portfolio school district – a system of diverse, autonomous schools on TN's Priority List that are temporarily transitioned from local LEA operation to ASD operation with the expectation that each school currently performing in the bottom 5% will move to the top 25% in TN within five years. There are currently 83 Priority Schools in the state with immediate need for transformative intervention. While transforming as many of the 83 schools as quickly as possible is important, it is of greater importance that all Priority schools selected to join the ASD, experience dramatic and sustained improvements in student achievement. For this reason, the ASD directly manages some schools, called Achievement Schools, and authorizes high quality charter and contract partners to operate other schools – immediately increasing the scale of the ASD's impact, while maintaining a high quality bar for all schools in the district.

In its first year, the ASD partnered with Metro Nashville Public Schools and Memphis City Schools to select six of the state's highest need schools to join the ASD in SY 2012-13, all of which are supported by SIG funds. Three of the schools are directly managed by the ASD and three are externally managed by successful charter operators. In SY 2013-14, the ASD will assume responsibility for the transformation of an additional six Priority Schools and will start three new schools to expand the availability of high quality school options for students zoned to attend Priority Schools in Memphis. Of the six additional Priority Schools that will begin their transformation in SY 2013-14, four (Corry MS, Shannon ES, Klondike ES, and Hanley ES) will be operated by strong, rigorously vetted charter operators and two (Whitney ES and Georgian Hills ES) will be managed by the ASD. The ASD and its charter partners will effectively leverage SIG funds to support the turnaround efforts of all of its Priority Schools.

The ASD embraces a student-first model to support the turnaround of its diverse portfolio of Priority schools. The ASD believes there is not a single best curriculum, hiring practice, teacher development program, master schedule or parent involvement strategy that can be hatched in the central office and forced upon all schools in a district with much success. This traditional, centralized approach to district

decision-making and support all too often has created systemically-induced school failure, in which schools are forced to implement common programs and models that may not meet the unique needs of individual schools and students. Districts that operate centralized, "Single Fit" governance structures are then incented to create more customized approaches to meet the needs of the subset of schools that seem to be struggling the most in such a system – in TN's case, the Priority Schools. Other district proposed i-zones are modeled off of the ASD's approach to supporting all of its Priority schools statewide.

Rather than create a special autonomous zone with increased access to resources for a subset of the schools in the district, the ASD takes the approach that every school requires the autonomy and direct access to school-centered resources to accomplish the turnaround goals for which they are held accountable. LEA support for the ASD's SIG schools is based on the belief that the highest probability for change will occur at the school level with appropriate decision-making by the school leaders and practitioners. Providing autonomy to operators and school leaders is a conduit for more effective decision-making that: 1) identifies and directly addresses the precise needs of the students in each school and 2) develops a cyclical process for setting and reaching goals that result in the most optimal outcomes for students.

Charter Operator and Achievement Schools' autonomy includes decision making for:

1. Staffing – School leaders select, retain, and release staff on needs of school and best fit for their school;

2. Time – School leaders set the daily operations schedule for their school;

3. Budget – School leaders have full-control over the school level budget and how to use the funds to best meet the needs of the students served at their school;

4. Program- School leaders determine programmatic structure, focus, and needs (e.g. Arts or STEM focused)

The ASD operates in two locations, Nashville and Memphis. The Nashville Support Team operates as a sub-unit of the Tennessee Department of Education. The ASD's Memphis Regional office is strategically located in one of the district's schools in the city where five of the six schools in the portfolio are serving students. The ASD Memphis Regional office is staffed with team members who are able to expeditiously provide direct, high-quality support to schools in a real-time fashion. It is currently staffed with the Achievement Schools' Head of Schools, along with instructional, technology and operations support staff who rotate throughout the schools daily providing requested support in roles relative to their positions and also providing extra hands to facilitate learning, community engagement and continuous improvement, as necessary.

The Support Team is lean and nimble, and just like the ASD's schools, each function on the Support Team is held accountable to rigorous performance goals that are grounded in service commitments to the schools. Two times per year, every ASD school, both charter and Achievement Schools complete a comprehensive survey that evaluates how effectively the Support Team is meeting its service level agreements to the schools. This transparent, demand-driven and accountability-based model of school support empowers schools to efficiently solicit the support they need, leverage the wealth of resources

from other schools in the ASD, and inform the continuous improvement of the Support Team's dynamic structure and service lines to schools.

ASD school leaders and teachers have direct access to the various members of the ASD Support Team, Achievement Schools' Head of Schools and Director of Schools (Superintendent). The Superintendent and Head of Schools provide direct support to ASD Achievement Schools through weekly check-ins and monthly principal meetings. The ASD provides a single Point of Contact (POC) in the Regional office to support implementation of the SIG grant. Online, real-time performance dashboards for each Achievement School are used to track student behavior and academic performance, in order to provide schools with early warning indicators to develop timely intervention(s) and targeted requests for support from the Support Team and/or from other schools in the network.

The direct support described above is pertinent to the ASD Achievement Schools, as ASD charter-authorized schools are under the direct governance of the approved charter management organizations that operate them. However, the ASD holds all schools accountable to the same rigorous performance targets that will result in each school moving from the bottom 5% to the top 25% in the state. As it relates to the implementation of the SIG grant, the Portfolio Management team, under the leadership of the Chief Portfolio Officer, provides charter schools with direct performance accountability guidance and reporting, compliance management, school practice reviews, network knowledge management and collaboration opportunities. In addition, the Portfolio Management team provides student access support and a single Point of Contact for differentiated support services, as requested.

2. **Commitment to support from relevant stakeholders.** What methods did the LEA use to consult with relevant stakeholders including administrators, teachers, staff, parents, teachers' organization, school board and community on the LEA's application and selection of intervention models in its Priority schools? List the stakeholders involved in the application process, consultation dates, and types of communication.

The ASD considers parent and community support and input vital to school accountability and success. The district undertakes considerable measures to inform all relevant stakeholders of the status and performance of home LEA Priority schools that are being considered to join the ASD. Equally important, the ASD actively seeks feedback from the community regarding: their priorities, requests and concerns. Information is shared with and solicited from relevant stakeholders in a variety of ways, including formal press conferences, in-school faculty meetings, parent letters, neighborhood community meetings, in-school open office hours, automated phone calls to parents, community phone banking, and informational webinars designed to inform and engage stakeholders. The ASD also communicated with stakeholders about the turnaround plans for identified schools via email, the district's website, Twitter, and Face Book. At least 20 opportunities for direct communication between the ASD and its stakeholders about the potential plans for identified Priority (SIG) schools in SY 2013-14 took place last fall and winter, reaching over 1100 parents, teachers and community members – please see below.

Faculty				Parent Communication			Community Meetings	
Date	Feeder Pattern	Schools	Location	Parent Call#1	Parent Letter	Parent Call#2	Date	Location
Mon 11/5 3:00-3:45	Frayser/ Trezevant	Georgian Hills ES	Georgian Hills ES	Mon 11/5	Tues 11/6		Thurs 11/8 5:30-7:00	Pursuit of God Church
Mon 11/5 4:00-5:00		Denver ES/ Whitney ES	Denver ES					
Mon 11/5 3:00-4:00	Northside (/Douglass)	Shannon ES/ Treadwell ES	Treadwell ES	Mon 11/5	Tues 11/6		Wed 11/14 5:30-7:00	Treadwell ES (NEW TBD)
Mon 11/5 4:00-5:00		Caldwell-Guthrie ES/ Klondike ES	Klondike ES				Thurs 11/8 5:30-7:00	Sexton CC (next to Northside HS)
Mon 11/5 3:00-4:00		Cypress MS	Cypress MS					
Wed 11/7 3:00-4:00	Hamilton	Norris ES / Alcy Ball ES	Norris ES	Wed 11/7	Thurs 11/8	Sun 11/11	Mon 11/12 5:30-7:30	Hamilton CC
Wed 11/7 4:00-5:00		Corry MS	Corry MS					
Wed 11/7 3:00-4:00	Fairley	Graves ES	Graves ES	Wed 11/7	Thurs 11/8	Sun 11/11	Mon 11/12 5:30-7:30	St. Paul Neighborhood Center
Wed 11/7 4:00-5:00	Melrose	Cherokee ES/ Hanley ES	Hanley ES	Wed 11/7	Thurs 11/8	Sun 11/11	Mon 11/12 5:30-7:30	Orange Mound CC

Parents were invited to engage in dialogue around three critical questions in order to gather information that would inform the transformation and/or restart process:

1. What should the school keep doing?

2. What should the school stop doing?

3. What should the school start doing?

The information gathered during the community meetings supports the strategies outlined in the School improvement Grant.

Neighborhood meetings and open houses were also hosted by charter management organizations to discuss with parents, teachers and community members their background and track records, academic approaches, staffing, student support models, and overall plans.

3. LEA SIG leadership. Describe the LEA School Improvement Grant team that will support and oversee the implementation of selected models and strategies in each of its Priority schools. Include descriptions of credentials, competencies, and responsibilities of any new or existing district staff who will serve SIG schools. One member must be team must be the district's Director of Federal Programs.

The selected SIG models the ASD will employ to transform these schools from the bottom 5% to the top 25% within five years are a direct reflection of the dramatically different governance structure, leadership competency and policy freedoms of the ASD. As reflected in Section III-B-1, the ASD empowers all schools to thrive using its innovative, quality-driven and people-powered approach to school turnaround. Chris Barbic, Superintendent/Director of Schools, leads this effort, drawing upon his successful experience founding and leading YES Prep Public Schools, a system of 12 charter middle and high schools that serve almost all low income students in Houston, TX.

Under Mr. Barbic's leadership, YES Prep eliminated nearly every income and ethnic achievement gap faced by urban schools nationwide – and closed gaps five times more often than other charter management organizations. Further, the percentage of YES Prep's low-income students who performed at the highest achievement level (Commended) ranked in the top third in the state for every available comparison (middle and high school reading, math and science). Finally, YES Prep has graduated 12 classes of seniors, 100% of whom have earned acceptance to a four-year college or university. As Chris Barbic leads the ASD's efforts to transform schools from the bottom 5% to the top 25% in the state, he does so based on the successful strategies and lessons learned from founding and leading YES Prep charter schools for over 13 years.

Most importantly, Mr. Barbic has built an extremely strong leadership team of high-performing individuals with a diverse set of complementary strengths and experience. The ASD Leadership Team's and Support Team's composition and service to SIG/all ASD Priority schools represents a deliberate collaboration of successful education and business support practices. The Support Team includes Chiefs and their respective teams: 1) Operations, 2) Portfolio Management, 3) Communications, and 4) Talent. The Achievement Schools' Head of Schools is also an essential member of the Leadership team to ensure that district policies and support strategies are guided by the evolving needs and realities of the schools we directly manage.

In the ASD, categorical funding streams do not dictate school programming. Instead, funding is strategically sought to deepen or extend the impact of schools' highest priority improvement efforts. As stated in Section III-B-1, all of the Priority Schools that the ASD currently serves and will serve in SY 2013-14 are SIG schools. Hence, SIG Leadership is District Leadership. The SIG schools' turnaround efforts are differentiated based on the needs of the schools. Likewise, the LEA-wide governance model that enables the success of the schools' selected turnaround efforts is based on autonomous decision-making by the adults working most closely with students, balanced by accountability to parents and community stakeholders to quickly achieve dramatic improvements in student learning and achievement.

Monitoring and compliance support of SIG grant implementation is a team effort. The SIG Coordinator is the ASD's Public Grants & Compliance Manager, who is a member of the Portfolio Management Team. She provides programmatic compliance guidance to schools in close partnership with the Director of Finance for the purpose of integrating financial management support with value-added compliance support. This approach enables schools to most effectively leverage the SIG funds to supplement the start-up expenses of their short-term turnaround efforts. The Finance Director and the Portfolio Office's Public Grants & Compliance Manager also work together to provide guidance, resources and monitoring for schools and operators leading up to and through the turnaround ramp-up period. This approach ensures the long-term sustainability of the turnaround efforts after the SIG funding is no longer available.

4. LEA Federal Grant Office. What is the LEA's finance office past history in the management of federal grants? Include any audit findings within the past five years. Does the LEA draw down federal funds at least quarterly?

The Achievement School District's finance office is managed by the Director of Finance with on-going collaboration with the ASD Leadership Team. The ASD's lean and effective finance team has twenty plus combined years of experience in business, finance and school operations as well as compliance management of federal programs including, Title I, II, III, IDEA, and free/reduced-price meals. Beginning April 1, the finance office will be led by the ASD's first Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Isabella Wilson. The CFO is supported by a finance team with significant experience in developing state and federal budgets, completing federal grant applications, drawing down federal funds, preparing and submitting federal and state reports, and performing revenue and expenditure analyses, reconciliations and monitoring of federal guidelines and regulations mandated by the US Department of Education.

The Achievement School District has not incurred any audit findings and the district draws down federal funds, essentially, twice per month as requests for reimbursement are made every payroll period.

5. Availability of Human Capital. What is the LEA's strategy for recruitment and selection of effective school leaders, teachers, and staff to work in its lowest performing schools? How will the LEA ensure that only teachers with performance evaluation scores of levels 3, 4, and 5 will be assigned to SIG schools?

The Achievement School District was created with the legislative authority to serve only the state's lowest performing schools and the students zoned to attend them, enabling these schools to improve from the bottom 5% in the state to the top 25% within five years. Therefore the ASD's talent recruitment and selection strategy for the district is, by definition, the LEA's talent strategy for the state's lowest performing schools.

The ASD's core values are grounded in the belief that poor performing schools become high performing schools when effective educators and school leaders are driving the change, rather than managing the implementation of decisions that are mandated by a district central office. As such, the Achievement School District holds as a top priority, the recruitment, selection, placement, development, and retention of top performing teachers, teacher leaders, and school leaders for and/or by each of its schools, with complete authority for staffing decisions retained by school leaders and operators. The ASD employs multiple strategies, working with a variety of teacher pipelines to identify, rigorously vet, make available to schools, and orient both novice and veteran, high performing teachers for operator and school leader selection.

Teacher pipelines include Teach for America, the Memphis Teacher Residency, institutions of higher education, and local and national recruitment of current teachers. The Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) was proven by the TN Higher Education Commission to be the most effective teacher preparation program in the state for the 2011-12 school year, with 64% of graduates earning statistically significant positive results in teacher effectiveness. One of the ASD's charter schools in SY 2012-13 leverages MTR

to staff most of their positions. The ASD has partnered with MTR to expand the number of ASD schools that its residents and graduates may be placed in for SY 2013-14.

The ASD will continue the partnership with Teach Plus through their T3 initiative to recruit and train veteran teachers, with a minimum of three (3) years' experience teaching in high poverty schools successfully, to become teacher leaders in these schools. No less than twenty-five (25) percent of the teachers in ASD schools will serve as a T3 Teacher Leader. This creates a critical mass of teachers in each school trained in the continuous and dynamic use of data, using student work, improving instruction and coaching colleagues to strategically change their practices to support improved student achievement.

The ASD Talent team ensures that each Achievement School has effective "turnaround leaders" who are competent in all aspects of leadership. An effective turnaround leader, when provided the appropriate level of autonomy and support, is capable of setting and meeting rigorous achievement standards. Securing effective "turnaround leaders" is achieved by a multi-faceted approach: 1) cultivating existing ASD employees with the potential to be school leaders, 2) selection of Planning Year Principals (PYPs) to be placed in the Ryan Fellowship, and 3) recruiting external school leaders with track records of success. Although there are various paths to becoming an ASD "turnaround leader", all candidates who are placed in the final pool engage in a rigorous interview process that includes presenting a developed Campus Design Plan, participating in multiple role plays, i.e. teacher feedback and parent engagement, and speaking in detail on the systems and practices they will leverage to be an effective turnaround leader on a daily basis.

The ASD has also developed a rigorous multi-stage selection process for teacher candidates. All potential candidates, novice and veterans, submit their applications for employment through an online portal. The application process includes writing three essays and participating in the Teacher Insight Gallup Survey. Those meeting the benchmark will be invited to an online interview that will be reviewed by multiple screeners and they will be required to submit a teaching video. Pending the successful completion of all of the required steps, applicants will be invited to participate in a teacher selection day. Selection Day consists of various activities for the teacher candidates. Multiple panels are developed, each consisting of three to four people. Each teacher candidate participates in a different activity associated with each of the panels. The activities include a review of each candidate's performance and interaction with other candidates to resolve issues, ability to provide an analysis of school improvement data, and capacity to provide constructive guidance to colleagues regarding their instructional practices. Successfully participating in Selection Day moves the teacher candidate to the final stage of the selection process. This includes teaching a live sample lesson and matching interviews with all interested school principals.

Records indicate that there are very few level 3, 4 or 5 teachers in Priority Schools in the years leading up to the schools' placement in the ASD. When a school joins the ASD, the local LEA-managed positions at the school are eliminated. The ASD encourages all previous teaching staff at a school to apply to be interviewed for a position in the new ASD- or Operator-managed school. All new ASD employees must go through the same rigorous selection process and if they have had prior teaching experience must be able to demonstrate a track record of effectiveness in the classroom.

6. **Process for evaluation and removal of ineffective principals, teachers, and staff.** What is the LEA's process for evaluation of teachers, principals, and staff and removal of ineffective principals, teachers, and

staff in SIG schools? If **not** removed from the LEA, how will tenured teachers and non-tenured teachers be reassigned?

The Achievement School District is a district designed to operate with maximum flexibility to ensure students are provided with an excellent educational option in their neighborhood school, and as such, the ASD's Achievement Schools operate with much of the same flexibilities as charters. The Achievement School District does not grant tenure to any employee. When former LEA Priority schools are selected to operate in the Achievement School District, many members of the teaching staff and school leadership team are replaced. All schools begin anew with higher performing staff, exceptional leadership and the same wonderful students.

Additionally, beginning with the 2011 school year, the Tennessee Teacher Evaluation process changed with the Tenure law. The new evaluation requires that student data is used as fifty (50) percent of a teacher's evaluation, thirty-five (35) percent of which must be individual or school value-added data. Teachers receive ratings to identify their levels of effectiveness from 1-5. Teachers who are currently employed at schools that will be joining the ASD and demonstrate the ability to improve student performance based on their value-added data (level 3 or greater), will have the option to apply for employment with the Achievement School District if the teacher desires.

During the course of the year, if an ASD teacher's performance drops precipitously, he or she is provided intensive support for their growth and development by the Principal and/or teacher leader. If after receiving intensive support, the teacher still does not facilitate adequate student growth and achievement, and the teacher's practice is evaluated as ineffective, he or she will not be invited to return to the ASD school or the Achievement School District the following year. Because the ASD is an at-will employee, in cases of extreme ineffectiveness, a teacher may be replaced during the school year.

Because the ASD does not offer tenure, ineffective teachers will not be reassigned to other positions within the organization. Our organizational priority is to be staffed as efficiently as possible outside of the classroom to maximize the number of dollars and resources available within the classroom.

Principals are also at-will employees with clear quantitative and qualitative performance goals, based on our mission to move schools from the bottom 5% to the top 25% in five years and our leadership framework. Should a principal not meet their annual targets, they will also be subject to dismissal from the district.

7. Plans for Evaluation/Monitoring of the Grant. How will the LEA monitor and evaluate progress toward annual goals for student achievement, SIG leading indicators and implementation of interventions?

The ASD has established rigorous performance targets that provide guidelines for schools to exceed the state targets of 3-5 percentage point annual growth, in order to achieve the district's mission of moving schools from the bottom 5% to the top 25% in the state within five years. Each year, schools are expected to make definitive progress toward this five year goal by meeting the annual State-tethered achievement benchmarks below in grades 3-8 RLA and Math, grade 3 RLA and grade 7 Math on TCAP:

- 2014: $\geq 5^{th}$ percentile statewide

- 2015: $\geq 25^{th}$ percentile

- 2016: $\geq 50^{th}$ percentile

- 2017: $\geq$ between 50th and 75th percentile

- 2018: $\geq 75^{th}$ percentile

On order to achieve these established achievement benchmarks, all schools in the district, including charter schools, are held accountable for meeting annual TCAP growth targets that exceed 8 percentage points growth per year. Further, all ASD schools administer the NWEA Map assessment to monitor cohort and individual student baseline performance, as well as midyear and end of year student growth.

The Portfolio Management team's Performance and Practice (P&P) staff collect, compile, analyze and report baseline, mid-year and end-of-year performance on the Achievement School District's accountability framework. The P&P staffs, in collaboration with the Public Grants and Compliance Manager and other ASD stakeholders, also conduct non-evaluative School Practice Reviews to provide objective observation and reflection for schools on the practices that they have prioritized in their charter and campus design plans and by extension in their SIG implementation plans. Thresholds for meeting compliance requirements have been established, including adhering to SIG monitoring requirements. The Public Grants & Compliance Manager leverages the output of the accountability reviews, school practice reviews, SIG reimbursement process and desktop reviews of required documentation for TDE and federal monitoring to assure effective implementation of the SIG grant.

8. 3 Year Budget – Provide an LEA 3-year budget sufficient for full and effective implementation of SIG grants for all schools in the approved application throughout the availability of the funds. Complete Appendix D, *Budget and Budget Justification Template.*

Appendix D Completed

C. **Lack of Capacity:** If the LEA is **not** applying to serve each Priority school, the LEA must explain why it lacks capacity to serve each Priority school. This must match the table labeled "Schools That the LEA WILL NOT Serve" in section B. The following areas should be addressed:
- The number of Priority schools;
- Access/proximity to higher performing schools (Closure Model);
- Recruiting ability for principals, especially for rural areas (Turnaround and Transformation models);
- EMO/CMO availability and capacity (Restart model);
- Ability to align funding from other sources with grant activities and to ensure sustainability of the reform (Turnaround Model, Restart Model, Transformation Model);
- Operational flexibility (Turnaround Model, Transformation Model); teacher evaluation system (Turnaround Model, Transformation Model).

Not Applicable- The Achievement School District is a State of Tennessee Department of Education Initiative by the Commissioner of Education to turnaround the lowest performing schools in the state. For the FY 13-14 school year, the ASD will add six (6) Priority schools to its portfolio, all of which will

engage in aggressive turnaround plans. Two (2) will be directly managed by the ASD and thus referred to as Achievement Schools; four (4) schools will be restarted as high performing neighborhood charter schools.

D. Preparation for Implementation of Interventions

1. Design and implement interventions consistent with the SIG final requirements.
Complete the appropriate model template (Appendix E, F, G, H) for each of the Priority schools the LEA will serve with SIG funds.

2. Recruitment, screening, and selection of external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality:

a. If external providers are to be funded as collaborative partners, describe how the LEA will recruit, screen and select partners to ensure quality. The LEA must demonstrate a rigorous recruiting, screening, and selection process that includes the following:
- A request for information (RFI) or other process for identification of potential providers;
- A protocol for analysis of the connection between the provider's experience and the district and each school's comprehensive needs assessment;
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to include a description of the provider's responsibilities and alignment with each school's needs, as well as the LEA and provider's shared accountability for the full and effective implementation of the intervention model and student achievement in the selected school;
- The LEA's process for monitoring and oversight of the provider's services.

The Achievement School District will continue to seek and develop partnerships with successful charter operators to extend the district's positive impact on TN's priority schools. The Achievement School District has authorized five (5) charter management organizations (CMOs) to operate Priority/SIG schools in the ASD in SYs 2012-13, 2013-14 and beyond. The CMOs were selected through a rigorous authorization process after they responded to an ASD-issued Request for Qualifications. The vetting and selection process was led by the New Schools Office on the Portfolio Management team with external facilitation by NASCA, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

The authorization process includes due diligence on operators' effectiveness in dramatically improving student learning in schools with similar student demographics as ASD-served priority schools. It also includes a rigorous evaluation of the operator candidates' charter applications, which propose research-based curriculum and instruction models, staffing plans, student support systems, parent and community engagement strategies and financial sustainability. The applications are evaluated by teams of staff from the ASD and Tennessee Department of Education with expertise in specialized areas of school management, national charter authorization experts from NACSA and Community Members. Applicants whose applications and effectiveness due diligence meet the ASD's requirements, are invited to a panel interview that requires school leadership and Board members to provide even greater evidence that the school will successfully serve students in the ASD.

Upon successful completion of the application process as described above, selected CMOs are authorized to operate schools in the ASD and the school matching process commences. The ASD executes ten year contracts with charter operators, with clear academic, operational and financial performance terms. Meeting the conditions and commitments of any federal or State grant, including the SIG grant, is one of

the terms in the contract. Mid-year, all operators receive a mid-year accountability report that indicates the ASD's assessment of the Operators' contractual performance, including grant compliance.

b. Describe how the LEA will recruit, screen, and select external providers of professional development to ensure their quality.

The ASD will follow the same intensive investigation of programs as outlined above, based on evidence of success in like schools to determine their fit for partnerships. Selection will also incorporate how the program fits into the scheme of the comprehensive approach for school improvement, e.g., consideration will be given to select programs that complement each other and are working as collaborative partners in other places successfully. All decisions will be steeped in evidence of a successful track record or innovation that offers a high likelihood of success.

Additionally, the Tennessee Department of Education vetted, approved and published a list of Whole School Reform Model and Content Area Professional Development vendors in 2010. This list is posted on the Department's website for LEA use. As necessary and appropriate this shall serve as one of the sources of contacts for selecting Professional Development providers for the ASD Achievement schools and is available for ASD Charter Authorized Schools. Moreover, we will continue our current professional development selections for services based on student data results to serve the individualized needs of teachers.

Performance targets will be included in contracts co-developed by the ASD and provider and will be reflected as deliverables. Achievement of the targets will be considered in the contract renewal decision-making process for all external providers of services to ASD schools.

Complete form in Appendix C, External Providers, if applicable, and attach to the application.

Please check appropriate box if Appendix C is attached. ☐ Yes ☒ No

3. **Alignment of other resources with interventions.** What specific actions will the LEA take to allocate additional funds to its Priority schools to align those funds awarded under 1003(g)? (e.g. State funds, Title I, Part A, Title I 1003(a), Title II, RTTT, etc.) Please note: The LEA may not use SIG funds to supplant funding or services that would be available to its Priority schools in the absence of SIG funds

It is important for the ASD to implement an approach to school turnaround that can be replicated by other districts in TN and in the country without the undue burden of being overly financed. Ensuring that the essential turnaround strategies of ASD schools are sustainable beyond the life of the SIG grant increases the viability of replicating the strategies at scale. The Achievement School District will continue to operate from the Basic Education Programs' per pupil funding formula, like all other LEAs. As an LEA, it will continue to utilize all available federal and state dollars to support the education of students in ASD schools. The ASD will be smart about how to structure funds to creatively address student needs. As appropriate and permissible by funding streams, the ASD will continue to reallocate dollars to generate expanded services to meet the needs of students. A careful review of programs and resources will be the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer and his team to ensure we are taking full advantage of all

available resources, creating a portfolio of funding options, inclusive of federal, state, local and private and in-kind resources to the degree possible to support schools. The intent of the ASD is to develop a sustainable turnaround model that is not a financial burden to implement. The ASD will examine applicable funding streams to ensure SIG funds are used in a supplemental capacity only.

4. **Modification of policies and practices.** Describe existing barriers to full and effective implementation of interventions in Priority schools. What are anticipated barriers? What practices and/or LEA board policies has or will the LEA modify to overcome barriers to the full and effective implementation of intervention models?

The Achievement School District has collaborated with TDE's Legislative Department and the State of Tennessee's Finance Department to develop a more streamlined approach to employment, financial management, procurement, policy development and execution. The aim of the ASD policy agenda is to minimize unnecessary bureaucratic elements that impinge on the most effective and efficient operations of schools. The ASD provides schools necessary autonomy, resources, and support while holding them accountable to rigorous performance standards. District policies reflect a minimalist approach to school management at the District level. The ASD works collaboratively with other State of Tennessee agencies, TDE departments, local LEAs, charter operators and school leaders to create a minimal set of policies that support vs overly prescribe and confine school innovation and resourcefulness. It is an iterative, needs-based process that improves with each iteration.

The ASD Leadership team collaboratively addresses emergent policy and procedural barriers throughout the implementation of the grant.

a.   Date of review and status of LEA board policy.

The Achievement School District began operating and authorizing the charter operation of Priority Schools in the 2012-2013 school year. While the ASD has developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and policies as required by state law, the ASD is not governed as a traditional school system by a local elected school board. The structure of governance for the ASD is more streamlined. The superintendent of the Achievement School District reports directly to the Commissioner of Education. The ASD may submit requests for waivers to the Commissioner of Education for any State Board Rule, but cannot request waivers of State laws.

   C. Date of review and status of LEA practices or procedures.

The Achievement School District has developed the required policies and procedures necessary to give guidance to its schools; however, wherever possible and with guidance, the ASD will provide the local Regional office and the local schools as much autonomy and flexibility as necessary and reasonable to achieve the goal of high student performance and accountability. The ASD will engage in a regular, continuous cycle of reflection to determine the effectiveness of its policies and procedures based on the quality of support to ASD schools and based on feedback from the local schools, parents, students and stakeholders. School stakeholders provide biennial formal review of Support Team practices and services, which drive changes to established policies and/or protocols, as necessary.

5. Sustainability

a. What additional funding resources will the LEA allocate to its Priority schools, including but not limited to federal, state, and local education funds. (e.g., Title I, state and/or other federal grant funding). <u>Please note: The LEA may not use SIG funds to supplant funding or services that would be available to its Priority schools in the absence of SIG funds.</u>

Achievement School District schools are slated to return to the Local Education Agency control within a five (5) year period. During the five year period, the Achievement School District will support its schools through the normal revenue streams for Tennessee Schools including per pupil share of all local, State and federal dollars generated by the students attending these schools. As appropriate, the ASD will redeploy the traditional use of funds to generate expanded services to meet the needs of students. A careful review of programs and resources will be the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer and his team to ensure we are taking full advantage of all available resources. The ASD will create a portfolio of funding, inclusive of federal, state, local, private and in-kind resources to the degree possible to support schools.

The goal of the Achievement School District is to create a Turnaround model that will continue to thrive once a school is returned to the Local Education Agency (LEA) absent of undue financial burden. Therefore, it is imperative that the resources of the SIG initiative be used to develop infrastructures that are sustainable through state and local funding sources which are a natural result of the Tennessee School Funding formulas. SIG initiatives will also focus on creating capacity within the people, establishing processes, creating structures and systems that can become institutionalized and sustained irrespective of costly programs and external partners. The ASD also recognizes that sustainable education improvement is not solely the function of dollars, but may also be a function of supports and other resources such as time and people. To that end, the goal of the ASD will also focus on developing community ownership of school improvement whereby parents and community partners will serve as a system of support and advocacy to continue the successful practices once the school is returned to the LEA.

b. How will the LEA sustain the reforms in its Priority schools after the period of SIG funding has expired? Include additional measures that it will take to continue reform after the life of the grant.

All schools in the Achievement School District suffer from low enrollment due to the impoverished area and poor performance of the school. The ASD wants to operate a more robust academic program that cannot be sustained by revenue generated by the current enrollment levels. Through a quality-driven and more robust academic program, the ASD will increase enrollment to a level where the recurring public funds will support its academic program. The most crucial element of change in schools is great teachers and leaders. The ASD will focus its improvement strategy on increasing the capacity of teachers and school leaders and will invest heavily in the identification, recruitment and support of high performing teachers through processes which make the ASD a desirable place to work. The ASD will create optimum working conditions and establish rigorous and rapid response systems of support to create a high performing culture of success. The ASD will identify all available resources, creating a portfolio of funding inclusive of federal, state, local and private and in-kind resources to the degree possible to support schools. The ASD will invest heavily in building capacity in people, addressing the immediate

needs of students in order to establish a structure where students are on grade level in three years, therefore creating a culture of excellence that will continue to attract and retain students and staff.

c. How will the LEA gather and share effective practices from the schools receiving SIG funds with other low-performing schools within the LEA?

The Achievement School District will employ multiple techniques for sharing effective practices, inclusive of but not limited to interactions in person and through electronic format. School leaders and school teams will evaluate the effectiveness of their academic and non-academic strategies, and use that data to determine continued implementation. Additionally, schools will share the data and instructional strategies in and among themselves as a district of mutually supportive, autonomous schools. Opportunities for schools to interact professionally by strategically visiting and learning from the practices in each other's classrooms and engaging in cross-functional planning and collaboration are available to individual teachers, grades and teams across all ASD schools, including charter schools.

Additionally, the ASD's annual, non-evaluative school practice reviews (SPRs) allow for a holistic reflection of school practices. These SPRs include a review of each school's campus design plan or charter contact, SIG/Title 1/i3 commitments, school artifact review, a prep/intake conversation with school leaders, and a comprehensive day-long school visit with school leader, teacher and student interviews, building walkthroughs and classroom observations. At the end of the SPR, the school leadership team receives a findings report that documents promising or developing school practices supported with evidence collected and identified with a point of contact. These documented practice findings provide informative reflection and feedback to school teams and enable portfolio-wide collaboration opportunities on practice areas of common interest.

6. Development of Systems for Collection of SIG Data

How the district will collect formative and summative student achievement data and the SIG leading indicator data. How will the LEA report findings/result to relevant stakeholders and the public.

 All ASD schools assess student academic performance three times annually using the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. Fall MAP test scores serve as a baseline and enable teachers to set individualized and rigorous student-level targets for the Spring that align with SIG TCAP-based academic performance targets. Winter MAP testing allows teachers to determine if students are on-track to meet their Spring targets and adjust instruction accordingly. Spring testing enables the comparison of ASD student growth to the growth of students who started at the same RIT (or skill level) nationally, and allows us to determine if schools are on track to achieve their current and future end-of-year SIG goals.

The ASD releases an end-of-year portfolio and school report card that reflects a range of academic achievement, growth and student equity performance results for individual schools and for the portfolio as a whole. SIG leading indicators will be collected from the schools bi-annually and reviewed as part of the mid-year and end of year school accountability monitoring process. All of the information reported on the ASD's performance report cards, including progress on SIG leading indicators is collected and tracked

through PowerSchool, EIS and/or internal performance dashboards adopted by individual schools. The Achievement Schools receive support from the Information Technology team to ensure the accuracy, transmission, and accessibility of this information while external operators have their internal IT teams that manage these systems. Information relevant to SIG leading indicators will be available to stakeholders in an electronic format on the Achievement School District's website and/or each school will ensure the information is accessible and shared with their stakeholders in a means that best fits the needs of the communities they serve.

IV. School Level Descriptive Information

An LEA must submit this section for **each individual school** it will serve.

Each Priority school must complete <u>one</u> of the four intervention model templates:

(1) Turnaround (Appendix E)

(2) Restart (Appendix F)

(3) Closure (Appendix G)

(4) Transformation (Appendix H)

Appendix C External Providers

(Include those being considered)

Name of External Provider	LEA or school served	School Improvement Expertise/Experience
KIPP Public Charter Schools	Shannon Elementary Corry Middle	With 125 schools across the nation, KIPP serves 33, 000 students who reside in educationally underserved communities, including English language learners and students with special needs. In the past four (4) years, 89% of KIPP students returned to their school the following year or completed the highest grade offered at their respective school. By the end of 8th grade, 94% of KIPP classes outperform local districts in Reading and 96% in Math.
Gestalt Community Schools (GCS)	Klondike Elementary	Gestalt (GCS) is the highest performing Charter Middle School in the State. It currently serves students in a high poverty neighborhood in Memphis. In 2012, GCS Scholars (students) were 100% proficient and advanced on the TCAP writing assessment. GCS was also recognized as a 2011 Score Prize winner for dramatically increasing student achievement in spite of challenges they face.
Aspire Public Schools	Hanley Elementary	Aspire has operated charter schools since 1998, currently serving over 12,000 students in five (5) cities across the state of California. It ranks #1 among large districts with 2/3 or more low-income students for the third year in a row.
TeachPlus	Corning Achievement ES Frayser Achievement ES Westside Achievement MS Georgian Hills ES Whitney ES	Teach Plus has been working with turnaround schools since 2007 and has experienced a high level of success in Boston Public Schools. Student data from the first two cohorts of T3 partner schools in Boston (as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System [MCAS]) reveals that the six schools participating in T3 during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years are accelerating student achievement across grade levels in both English language arts (ELA) and math. In grades 3 to 8, T3 Initiative partner schools are seeing greater gains, on average, in student achievement than their counterparts across Boston Public Schools or across the state's pool of "turnaround" schools.

| TNTP | Corning Achievement ES
Frayser Achievement ES
Westside Achievement MS
Georgian Hills ES
Whitney ES | TNTP was formed in 1997 with the aim of giving poor and minority students equal access to effective teachers. In 15 years, TNTP has worked with over 200 school districts to recruit, train, and professionally develop teachers, also approved to train certify teachers in seven states and the District of Colombia. As a highly sought after program, last year 33,000 applicants applied to teach through TNTP; it's rigorous standards led to the acceptance of 9% of those applicants. |